

## PART VI

## LIVESTOCK, DAIRYING AND POULTRY

General Importance

Livestock and livestock products form the most important part of Stevens County's agricultural economy. According to the Census of Agriculture, farmers in the county sold animals and animal products worth \$5,676,015 in 1959. This figure represents nearly 60 percent of the value of all farm products sold in the county during that year.

In 1959, Stevens County livestockmen received \$2,987,637 from sales of livestock and livestock products other than poultry and dairy. Most of this sales figure represents cattle and/or calves sold alive off the farms. Farm sales of dairy products totaled \$2,499,445 during the same year. Also in 1959, the marketing of poultry and poultry products off the farm added \$188,933 to the county's agricultural economy. The importance of the county's livestock industry as indicated above by the amount of sales is further shown by the fact that most of the area's cropland is devoted to feed crops.

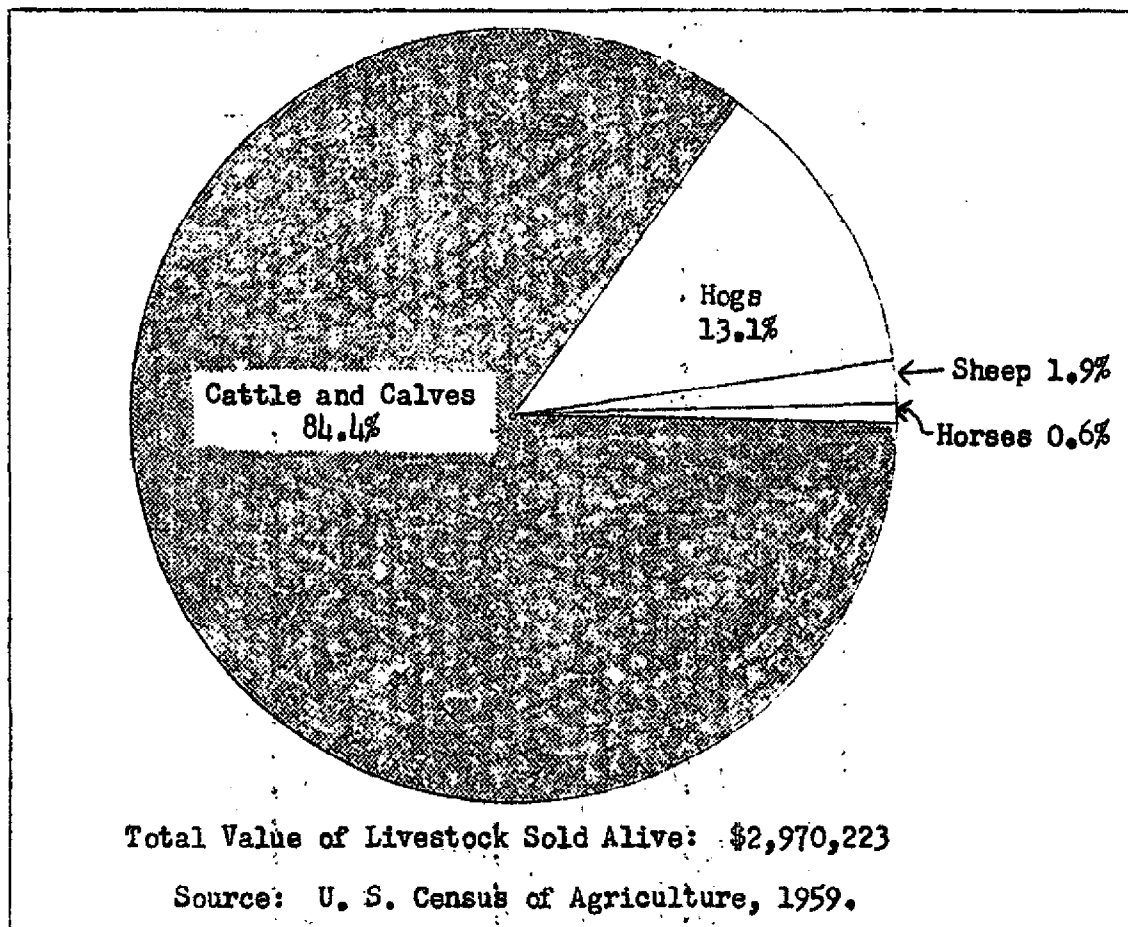


Figure 12. Value of Livestock Sold Alive  
Stevens County, 1959

Livestock Trends

Significant changes have occurred in livestock farming in Stevens County since 1940. The value of livestock and livestock products sold increased from \$1,371,476 in 1940 to \$5,676,015 in 1959. There were more cattle, hogs and sheep in the county in 1959 than in 1940 while the opposite was true for horses, chickens and turkeys. Changes also have occurred in the production of dairy and poultry products. Although the production of whole milk has increased over the years, cream sold off the farms has been reduced considerably. Farm eggs have increased in sales in recent years but drastic drops have occurred in the marketing of chickens and turkeys.

Cattle: Beef and Dairy

Beef and dairy cattle are the mainstay of Stevens County agriculture. According to the Census of Agriculture, nearly 86 percent of the farms in the county reported cattle and/or calves on hand in 1959. The combined value of cattle and calves plus dairy products sold off Stevens County farms in 1959 amounted to \$5,005,839 or about 53 percent of the value of all farm products sold during that year.

Table 22. Livestock Numbers on Farms  
Stevens County, 1939-1962

Year	All Cattle (head)	Beef Cattle (head)	Dairy Cattle (head)
1939	34,700	13,600	21,100
1940	35,500	14,800	20,700
1941	38,000	17,000	21,000
1942	41,000	17,100	23,900
1943	48,000	20,600	27,400
1944	49,700	23,700	26,000
1945	44,600	21,600	23,000
1946	42,000	20,600	21,400
1947	41,500	22,600	18,900
1948	34,500	15,900	18,800
1949	34,400	17,600	16,800
1950	35,600	18,800	16,800
1951	34,500	19,100	15,400
1952	36,700	21,000	15,700
1953	42,000	25,600	16,400
1954	45,500	28,100	17,400
1955	49,500	32,900	16,600
1956	47,000	30,100	16,900
1957	45,700	28,400	17,300
1958	45,700	29,600	16,100
1959	45,000	28,400	16,600
1960	45,000	28,700	16,300
1961	45,000	29,800	15,200
1962	51,000	34,700	16,300

Source: Statistical Reporting Service, U.S.D.A.

Since 1939, there has been increased interest in raising beef cattle among Stevens County farmers. This situation was largely prompted by the greater demand for, and higher prices for beef which came during World War II in the 1940's and later from the Korean conflict in the 1950's. Another element which has favored beef production is the fact that the raising of beef cattle entails less labor and equipment than dairying. Many part-time farmers have gone into beef cattle production as a sideline. Over the years stockmen have been able to increase their ability to handle more animals by use of modern machinery and better land use practices.

Beef cattle in Stevens County increased from 13,000 head in 1939 to 23,700 in 1944, dropped to 15,900 in 1948 and then rose to 32,900 by 1955. Since 1955, numbers have gone down to 28,400 head in 1957 and again in 1959 but a recent upward trend resulted in an all-time high of 34,700 in 1962.

The war-time population increase in the Spokane metropolitan area and the resulting greater demand for fluid milk stimulated expansion of dairy farming in Stevens County. Dairy herds and animals reached record numbers in 1943 and 1944. Since World War II, the dairy cattle population has leveled off at less than pre-war figures. Since 1949, numbers have ranged in the neighborhood of 16,000 to 17,000 head. Greater emphasis placed on beef production accounted for much of the decrease in dairy cattle numbers. Competition from other areas of the Spokane milkshed, particularly the Columbia Basin, has also had the affect of reducing local interest in dairying. The production of fluid milk, however, has not declined with reduction in dairy cattle numbers. The amount of milk sold off the farms increased from about 16,000,000 pounds in 1944 to over 49,500,000 pounds in 1959. Improvement of dairy herds and dairy husbandry has resulted in increased productivity.

A relatively recent change has been the selling of more whole milk to the Spokane market and less local processing of milk. The separation of milk for cream as a farm activity has steadily declined over the years. In 1944, Stevens County dairymen sold about 1,240,000 pounds of butterfat in cream but by 1959 this was down to 351,312 pounds. In this regard, however, Stevens County was number one in the volume of butterfat in cream sold off the farms among the 39 counties of Washington in 1959.

Table 23. Dairy Products Sold From Farms  
Stevens County, 1949-1959

Year	Any Milk or Cream Sold (dollars)	Whole Milk Sold (pounds)	Butterfat in Cream Sold (pounds)
1949	1,406,394	22,393,587	629,597
1954	1,722,178	33,947,096	569,966
1959	2,499,445	49,541,012	351,312

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

Most of the cattle in Stevens County are located in the Colville Valley but are also found in lowland areas elsewhere in the county as well as in upland grazing lands depending on the season of the year. Dairy cattle are largely concentrated in the area southeast of Chewelah where distance-cost from the Spokane milk market is not prohibitive.

### Poultry Farming

Poultry farming in Stevens County has steadily declined in importance since 1949. Sales of poultry and poultry products from the county's farms decreased 25 percent from \$253,685 in 1949 to \$188,933 in 1959. Chickens sold numbered 36,399 in 1949 compared with 28,386 in 1959. Farms specializing in poultry decreased in number during the decade beginning in 1950 from 24 to 20. The total number of farms which sold chickens and/or eggs also declined during this period. The current trend is toward large commercial flocks on specialized poultry farms. Among Washington counties, Stevens ranked twentieth in the number of chickens sold and eighteenth in eggs sold during 1959.

The number of chickens four months and older on farms in Stevens County in 1959 was 59,169. The trend in chicken numbers since 1939 has been gradually downward. Poultrymen utilize both light-weight and heavy-weight breeds. The White Leghorn is favored for egg production. Chicken farms are most numerous in the vicinities of Colville and Chewelah.

Table 24. Chickens, Eggs and Turkeys  
Stevens County, 1939-1959

Year	Chickens 1/ (birds)	Egg Production (dozens)	Turkeys Raised (birds)
1939	76,181	620,297	4,369
1944	75,926	669,065	2,480
1949	69,870	387,103 2/	4,031
1954	69,547	349,522 2/	4,946
1959	59,169	502,721 2/	643

1/ Four months and older. 2/ Eggs sold.

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture.

Eggs sold off Stevens County farms in 1959 amounted to 502,721 dozen or an increase of 44 percent above the 1954 sales. Over 380 farms reported having sold eggs in 1959 compared with 597 in 1954. The current trend is toward larger commercial flocks and specialized poultry farms.

In 1954, four farms reported having sold 19,104 broilers in Stevens County. Five years later in 1959, however, only two farms sold a total of 4,000 broilers. Other chickens sold numbered 24,386 and were reported by 226 farms in 1959 in contrast to 20,113 sold by 307 farms in 1954.

Stevens County's turkey production is minor. Only 643 birds were reported in 1959 by 56 farms. In 1954, the turkey population in the county was 4,946 raised on 132 farms. Only 4 farms had flocks of over 50 birds in 1959.

### Hogs

Stevens County ranked sixth in hog numbers among Washington counties in 1959. However, hogs have decreased in numbers since the peak years during World War II. The Census of Agriculture inventory taken in the fall counted 7,811 head in 1954 compared with a larger figure in 1959 of 8,597 enumerated on 550 farms. In 1959, 356 farms reported having sold alive 11,833 hogs and pigs during the year for

which farmers received a total of \$398,489. Commercial hog raising has remained relatively popular in the county for two main reasons. There is a good local supply of feed which includes barley as well as skimmed milk from dairy farms selling butterfat. The area has also long enjoyed a close and well-established tie with livestock marketing and meat packing interests in Spokane.

Most of the hogs in Stevens County are raised in the northern sections of the Colville Valley. Many are also found on farms in the southwestern parts of the county, especially in the vicinity of Hunters.

Table 25. Hogs, Sheep, Horses and Mules  
Stevens County, 1939-1959

Year	Hogs (head)	Sheep (head)	Horses and Mules (head)
1939	8,316	5,839	7,742
1944	10,257	6,951	6,299
1949	8,207	3,244	4,049
1954	7,811	4,414	2,248
1959	8,597	5,931	1,677

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture

### Sheep

Raising sheep in Stevens County declined during the years immediately following World War II but has since then been met with more favor so that sheep numbers have been on an upward trend in recent years. The sheep count increased 83 percent from 3,244 head in 1949 to 5,931 head in 1959. Early sheepmen with large range flocks in the area practiced transhumance--the seasonal movement of livestock between high and lowland grazing areas. At present, however, sheep are largely confined to small farm flocks. Farms with sheep numbered 133 in 1959 with the majority of the farm flocks composed of less than 25 head. In 1959, 4,362 sheep and lambs worth \$56,706 were sold alive by Stevens County farmers while 42,472 pounds of wool were shorn from 5,012 sheep. Sheep are found in all lower valley farmlands but are most numerous around Colville and in the Springdale-Clayton area.

### Horses and Mules

The number of horses and mules in Stevens County has declined greatly since 1920 as the need for work and draft animals decreased in the wake of farm mechanization. Draft horses of earlier years have largely disappeared and saddle horses are the most prevalent type today. In 1920, there were 9,725 horses and mules on farms and in 1959 there were only 1,677 head. In 1959, 133 horses and mules were sold off 71 farms for \$16,634.

Table 26. Livestock Sold From Farms  
Stevens County, 1959

Livestock Sold	Number of Farms Reporting	Number Sold	Value in Dollars
Cattle	999	11,336	1,756,718
Calves	789	9,561	749,676
Horses and Mules	71	133	16,634
Hogs and Pigs	356	11,833	390,489
Sheep and Lambs	113	4,362	56,706
Broilers	2	4,000	No data
Chickens (other than broilers)	226	24,386	No data

Source: U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1959.